

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 18-19, 20, 22, 25, and 27-28 have been amended to more clearly define the claimed invention. Claims 10-14, 19, 23-24, 26 and 29 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 30-36 have been added to provide Applicants with the scope of protection to which they are believed entitled. The amended/new claims find solid support in the original specification and drawings, e.g., FIGs. 5-7 and the corresponding text in the specification. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

The repeated 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejections of the claims as being obvious over various references are noted. Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the Examiner's position, for at least the reasons detailed in the previous Amendment, further amendments have nevertheless been made for the purpose of expediting prosecution.

Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 1 is patentable over the applied art of record at least because, independent **claim 1** recites "... a special game shift unit for, before the game starts, causing the game to shift from a normal mode to a special mode based on a common feature". Applicants respectfully submit that the applied references do not fairly teach or suggest at least the above features of claim 1. For example, the Yoseloff reference, which the Examiner alleges to teach the claimed special game shift unit, appears to only disclose that the bonus event is triggered based on the number of pre-defined events occurring in the play of the game (See para [0031] lines 8-10), which instigates a person having ordinary skill in the art to interpret that the bonus event is triggered only when a basic game is being played and not before. Therefore, there is lack of motivation to combine the applied references. It should be noted that the special mode, according to embodiments of the claimed invention, is shifted before the starting of the game, thereby preventing the players from waiting for a long time to transmit to a special mode

and losing the enthusiasm to the game itself.

Further, nowhere, in the applied references, it is disclosed that a shift from a normal mode to a special mode of the game is based on a common feature. It should also be noted that the special mode, according to embodiments of the claimed invention, is based on the common of each player of the player group, therefore the players obtain a sense of connection to the other players or a sense of representation as well as pleasure of playing a game in the special mode. At least for the above reasons, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Further, amended claim 2 recites "...a special game shift unit for, before the game starts, causing the game to shift from a normal mode to a special mode based on a different feature..."

Applicants respectfully submit that the applied references do not fairly teach or suggest the "...before the game starts..." feature of claim 2 (please refer to the arguments presented in the paragraph bridging pages 8 and 9 of this response). Further, nowhere, in the applied references, it is disclosed that a shift from a normal mode to a special mode of the game is based on a different feature. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 2 is respectfully requested.

Further, with respect to claims 18 and 19, claims 18 and 19 have been amended to depend from amended independent claims 1 and 2, respectively and hence are believed patentable over the applied art of record at least for the reasons advanced above with respect to claims 1 and 2.

Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 22 is patentable over the applied art of record at least because, amended claim 22 recites "... (iv) determine whether the personal attribute information of each of the players of the player group shares a common feature or a different feature, (v) generate a special game and send a special game start signal to the gaming terminals of the player group, when it is determined that the personal attribute information shares the common feature or the different feature, (vi)..." This feature is not disclosed by the applied reference. For example, nowhere in the Sparks reference or the Yoseloff reference, it is taught or suggested that a special game is generated based on the common features or the different feature of the personal

attribute information. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 22 is respectfully requested.

With respect to claim 25, amended claim 25 now recites “...award a title related to the common feature or the different feature to a winning player of the game in the special mode ...” The applied references do not teach or suggest the above mentioned feature of claim 25. For example, while the other applied references simply fail to disclose the above mentioned feature, the examiner-identified portion of Marks reference (US 5,882,260) discloses in so far that a tournament award may be merely declaring a first place winner and does not mention as to awarding a title related to common feature or the different feature. Further, the Marks reference also does not teach a second feature of the claimed embodiment, namely, “...the title associated with the winning player in the storage device ...” At least for the above reasons, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 25 is respectfully requested.

Patentability of new claims:

At the outset, new claims 30-33 are dependent on amended independent claims 1, 2 or 22 and hence are believed patentable over the applied art of record at least for the reasons advanced above with respect to claims 1, 2 and 22.

Further, claim 32 is believed patentable over the applied art of record based on its own merits because claim 32 recites “...two kinds of game credits are used for showing the results of the game, and one kind is a jewel which has a relation with the personal attribute information, and the other kind is a point which has no relation with the personal attribute information.” The applied references simply fail to disclose the above mentioned features of claim 32.

Further, new independent claim 34 is believed patentable over the applied art of record at least because claim 34 recites “...game to shift from a normal mode to a special mode based on either the players in the group having the same value under a common one among the personal attributes or all the players having different values under said common personal attribute.” The applied references simply fail to teach or suggest the above mentioned feature of claim 34.

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Further, claim 35 and 36 are dependent from claim 34 and hence are believed patentable over the applied art of record at least for the reasons advanced above with respect to claim 34.

Conclusion:

Accordingly, all claims in the present application are now in condition for allowance. Early and favorable indication of allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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